leaders understand it. Finally they concluded that Brunswick with the main army should draw back northward down the Saale toward Freiburg to guard the line of supply, that Hohenlohe should cover the retreat, and that Riichel should concentrate at Weimar. The French having used this long interval of debate to the utmost advantage, it was then too late to avoid a collision. Hohenlohe, therefore, was opposite Napoleon; Brunswick came upon Davout at Auerstadt.

In the misty dawn of October fourteenth the Emperor put himself at the head of Lannes's troops, and, calling upon them to remember their success with Mack the previous year under similar circumstances, began the attack. As he had correctly estimated, there were between forty and fifty thousand in the opposing ranks, but owing to the fog there was much confusion among them. Thinking there might be more in the mist behind, he was convinced that he had before him the main army of the Prussians. The response of Lannes's men to his appeal was so hearty that with the help of Ney's van they were able to engage and hold the enemy for over two hours. This was a precious interval for Napoleon, enabling him to secure further reserves and to complete his careful dispositions for a crushing final attack. It was a characteristic delay, for, realizing how impotent to control the close of a battle even he himself would be under his system, he was correspondingly obdurate in dominating its beginning to the least detail. To hold straining columns of eager soldiers in a leash for two hours is serious work. On this occasion, as the Emperor stood by his guard, a nervous voice from the ranks called out, "Forward!" "That must be a beardless boy," said he, "who wishes to forestall what I am about to do. Let him wait until he has commanded in twenty battles before he dares to give me advice."